

FISH TALES

Youth Fishing Program, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
Aksarben Aquarium 21502 W. Hwy 31 Gretna, NE 68028 (402) 332-3901

SUMMER/FALL 2012

Hello, Youth Fishing Instructors!

It's been a busy summer! The aquatic education staff was active nearly every day fishing with school groups, summer schools, scouts, and families. Many of you were with us at these events, and we are very grateful. We couldn't have done it without you. We'd love to hear some highlights from events you hosted over the summer. Please send your stories to Lindsey to be included in our next newsletter. Here are a few highlights from our summer...

Fishing at Aksarben Aquarium

This spring and summer, the Aksarben Aquarium Outdoor Education Center hosted fishing for school and summer school groups at the Schramm Park Ponds. Nearly 800 students participated in fishing, and nearly 800 students caught a fish! The Schramm fishing pond is an ideal spot because it is teeming with aggressive hybrid bluegill/green sunfish that are eager to take a juicy earthworm! To slow down the catch so we could have time to work with each student, aquarium staff developed a data collection activity that was particularly successful. Students were asked to work in teams and to identify each fish they caught and then to measure and record their catch. This

introduced a friendly competition with each group to see which team would catch the biggest or the most fish.

The activity also served a purpose in encouraging students to handle fish and to work together. As a bonus, we now have catch data spanning the entire summer that we can display in the aquarium classroom. If anyone is interested in doing a similar activity with your own groups, contact Lindsey at the aquarium for the materials. Special thanks to members of *Go Fish Omaha!* for repeatedly volunteering staff to help at these events.

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Family Fishing 2012

This year's Family Fishing consisted of 28 events held throughout the spring and summer, and included the popular Carp-O-Rama held at Pawnee Lake, near Lincoln, and a Family Fish and Camp weekend at Fort Kearny. Family Fishing nights kicked off in Scottsbluff on May 1st, where we had a wonderfully attended evening event after

the Scottsbluff Outdoor Discovery Program and ended with an ideal night of fishing at Holmes Lake in Lincoln on August 16th, where we finally had a reprieve from the heat and NGPC staff came out and demonstrated Dutch oven cooking. Volunteers and participants were treated to delicious fruit cobblers! We have not tallied a total attendance count for 2012, but estimate the final numbers will be down slightly from last year's attendance of 2,000. We think that this summer's extreme heat deterred families from attending (for example, it was 109°F in North Platte at 6:00 PM on the night of the June 26th event)! Unfortunately, we had to cancel the July 14th Lake Maloney Carp-O-Rama due to a fish kill, which also impacted our total attendance. Our best success this summer was with special activities such as Flyfishing Instruction at the Omaha, Benson Lake event on July 24th (Special thanks to the Trout Unlimited crew). In 2013, we want to better design and market these special activities, as they are very much appreciated by participants. We will be asking for your

expertise in creating and presenting topics such as; Flyfishing, Catfish Fishing, Bass Fishing, [Insert your ideas here], etc. If you would like to volunteer to host an evening of special instruction at next year's Family Fishing Nights, please contact Larry Pape.

2nd Annual High School Fishing Tournament

NGPC and The Bass Federation hosted the 2nd Annual Nebraska State High School Fishing Tournament on July 28th at Summit Lake near Tekamah. Sixteen teams competed, but Zach Madsen and Matt Neiburg of Blair took home the prize. Both students, seniors at Blair High School, will represent Nebraska at an upcoming regional tournament in October. Last year's winning team, Drew Bailey and Adam Diehl of North Platte, won the regional championships and took 5th place in the national competition. We are excited to see competitive fishing gaining momentum with high school students, and are proud to support Zach and Matt as they go on to compete at the regionals!

STAFF BIO: TYLER KAPPLE

Conservation technician

I have been employed with NGPC since May of 2012 and work within the fisheries division. I recently completed my bachelor's degree in fisheries science at UNL. Prior to NGPC I spent two years with a private organization, as a biologist technician sampling privately owned lakes. My position at NGPC is

primarily focused on aquatic education where I am able to devote my day teaching today's youth about fish biology, ecosystems and fishing techniques. I can be found most nights at Family Fishing events held throughout the state. I am excited to continue my career in outdoor education.

AQUATIC RESOURCE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

We are reviewing our current curriculum offered to educators. To those of you who are educators, we could really use your input! What do you find useful in the classroom? How can our curriculum fit in to your teaching requirements? What is the best format to provide curriculum? Please share your thoughts with either Lindsey or Larry.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Currently, our primary method of communicating events to you is **email** contact through the CERVIS database. Recently, a lot of emails are returned to us as undeliverable. Please login to <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/admin/cervis/> to check your account and make sure we have your current email address. If you do not have access to email and would like to be notified of volunteer opportunities, please give us a call and let us know. Thank you!

PARTICIPATION INCENTIVES

We ask for your continued patience as we review and overhaul our records database. We have identified some glitches in our record keeping, and are working hard to

make our records current and to make sure everyone who volunteers is recognized for their work. If you are aware of any discrepancy in our record keeping, please contact Susie Bliss

(susie.bliss@nebraska.gov) at the Aquarium.



OUTDOOR FAMILIES EVENT TRAILER

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in conjunction with Nebraska Pheasants Forever have created a trailer designed to help organizations or groups conduct a festival geared at getting children and families outside. The trailer, available for free check-out, contains all supplies to lead 18 different outdoor activities. Activities include bird watching, geo-caching, air rifles, scavenger hunts, tracks, skulls, pelts and more.

For more information or to reserve a trailer, visit: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/ofet/>

SEASON WRAP PARTY

Fishing and Food

You are invited to join us in celebration of another successful fishing season with the Youth Fishing Program. We're planning an afternoon and evening of fishing, good company, and good food to commemorate the year. Food and drink will be provided; just plan to bring your fishing gear. Families are welcome, too. Please RSVP to Lindsey by September 17th for one of the following dates:

- September 25:** Lake Ogallala
September 26: Fort Kearny
October 2: Mahoney State Park

At each location, we'll plan to meet at 3 PM, fish until dusk, and then gather for food and drink. We hope to see you there, and will provide detailed information about where to meet a week prior to the event.



IN THIS EDITION: a summary of summer fishing activities, a staff bio from our aquatic education technician, and an invitation to celebrate another successful fishing season with the aquatic education team!



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